

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3756

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E.O. 11652: N.A.
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, SP
SUBJECT: POLITICAL MISCELLANY: ELS JOGLARS VERDICT;
SOCIALIST UNITY; TERRORIST OUTRAGE; PEASANT DISCONTENT;
ROYAL ACCORD

1. ELS JOGLARS VERDICT HANDED DOWN. THE MILITARY TRIAL OF FOUR MEMBERS OF THE MIME TROUPE, WHICH HAD BEEN SUSPENDED TEMPORARILY ON FEBRUARY 28, AFTER ALBERT BOADELLA AND ANOTHER DEFENDANT FLED, TOOK PLACE ON MARCH 6 (SEE MADRID 2299). ON MARCH 7 THE COURT ANNOUNCED THAT IT HAD FOUND THE FOUR GUILTY OF "INJURING" THE MILITARY, AND SENTENCED EACH OF THEM TO TWO YEARS IN PRISON. IN ORDER FOR THE SENTENCE TO BE OFFICIAL, LTGEN COLOMA GALLEGOS, CAPTAIN GENERAL OF THE CATALAN MILITARY REGION, MUST APPROVE IT. REACTION TO THE VERDICT HAS BEEN IMMEDIATE, WITH ALL MAJOR POLITICAL GROUPS IN BARCELONA DEMANDING THE APPLICATION OF THE AMNESTY TO THE FOUR DEFENDANTS AND WITH THE TWO MAJOR LABOR UNIONS -- THE SOCIALIST UGT AND COMMUNIST-BACKED WORKERS COMMISSIONS -- ISSUING A JOINT COMMUNIQUE CONDEMNING THE SENTENCES AND CALLING FOR DEMONSTRATIONS IN SUPPORT OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION DURING THE WEEK OF MARCH 10-17.

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SHORT OF PRESSURE ON THE STRONG WILLED COLOMA NOT TO APPROVE THE VERDICT, IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT THE GOVT WILL BE ABLE TO DO IN THE IMMEDIATE TERM TO PREVENT SPAIN FROM ONCE AGAIN JOINING THE LIST OF THOSE COUNTRIES HOLDING POLITICAL PRISONERS.

3. PSOE-PSP MERGER TALKS PROGRESS. LEADERS OF THE TWO SOCIALIST PARTIES, BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, ARE

APPLAUDING THE PROGRESS BEING MADE IN UNIFICATION TALKS. THE PSOE'S FEDERAL COMMITTEE LAST WEEKEND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S UNIFICATION INITIATIVES. IN SPITE OF SOME INTRAMURAL SNIPPING, PSP LEADER TIerno GALVAN ALSO APPEARS TO BE SUPPORTED BY THE BULK OF HIS PARTY IN HIS PURSUIT OF SOCIALIST UNITY. THE PSP CONGRESS WILL CONSIDER THE MERGER ISSUE THIS MONTH, AND THE AGREEMENT MAY BE FORMALIZED BY A MEETING OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE TWO PARTIES IN EARLY TO MID-APRIL. THE ONLY PROBLEMS REMAINING TO BE RESOLVED, ACCORDING TO BOTH PSOE AND PSP SOURCES, PERTAIN TO PERSONALITIES AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES. THESE, OF COURSE, CAN STILL BE VERY THORNY AND IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THESE UNIFICATION EFFORTS WILL BE CROWNED WITH SUCCESS.

4. THE MOST INTERESTING TANGIBLE PRODUCT OF PSOE-PSP MERGER TALKS THUS FAR IS A DRAFT POLITICAL/IDEOLOGICAL MANIFESTO WHICH WAS DISSEMINATED MARCH 4. THE DOCUMENT (INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION BEING POUCHED) IS BASICALLY A REITERATION OF NOW FAMILIAR PSOE RHETORIC, AND AS SUCH IT GIVES LITTLE COMFORT TO THOSE WHO ARE HOPING FOR THE PSOE TO BECOME A MORE MODERATE POLITICAL FORCE. THE DOCUMENT STATES IN THIS REGARD THAT THE UNIFIED PARTY WILL BE A MARXIST, CLASS, DEMOCRATIC PARTY WHICH WILL WORK TO TRANSFORM CAPITALISM. NOT ADMINISTER IT. THERE ALSO ARE VISIBLE NODS TO TIerno IN THE MANIFESTO'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WARNINGS AGAINST A "EUROCENTRIST" TENDENCY OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, ITS REAFFIRMATION OF SPANISH SOCIALISM'S MEDITERRANEAN AND IBEROAMERICAN, AS WELL AS EUROPEAN, VOCATION, AND ITS INSISTENCE ON THE NEED FOR A "CULTURAL REVOLUTION" IN SPAIN. THE DOCUMENT WILL NOW BE REVIEWED BY THE LEADERS OF BOTH PARTIES. A NUMBER OF LOCAL COMMENTATORS HAVE BEEN QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT THE DOCUMENT IS A FAR CRY FROM THE PSOE'S MODERATION IN LAST YEAR'S ELECTION CAMPAIGN. AS RESPECTED JOURNALIST (AND UCD DEPUTY) LUIS APOSTUA STATED MARCH 7 IN MADRID'S "YA," THE PARTIES CLEARLY ARE ADDRESSING THEIR RANK AND FILE, NOT THEIR ELECTORATE, IN THE DOCUMENT, WHICH APOSTUA THEN DESCRIBED AS ONE OF THE MOST BELLICOSE AND INTRANSIGENT SOCIALIST DOCUMENTS IN RECENT MEMORY.

5. ETA CLAIMS VITORIA KILLINGS. AS EXPECTED, THE BASQUE TERRORIST ETA'S MILITARY WING HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MACHINE GUNNING OF FIVE ARMED POLICEMEN IN THE BASQUE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF VITORIA (ALAVA) ON MARCH 3. TWO OF THE FIVE VICTIMS WERE KILLED IMMEDIATELY, THE OTHER THREE ARE IN GRAVE CONDITION, WITH ONE OF THEM REPORTEDLY NEAR DEATH. SOME 100 UNIFORMED ARMED

POLICEMEN REPORTEDLY JOINED IN A DEMONSTRATION OF ABOUT 1000 PEOPLE IN DOWNTOWN VITORIA MARCH 6, AFTER FUNERAL MASSES FOR THE TWO SLAIN MEN WERE CELEBRATED. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT ETA HAD INTENDED TO MARK THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE KILLING OF 5 DEMONSTRATORS IN VITORIA BY POLICE ON MARCH 3, 1976 WITH A SERIES OF ASSAULTS ON POLICE UNITS, BUT THE VITORIA MACHINEGUNNING WAS THE ONLY ONE WHICH WAS EFFECTIVELY CARRIED OUT.

6. FARM LABOR PROBLEMS. THE PLIGHT OF UNEMPLOYED FARM LABORERS IN THE 8-PROVINCE REGION OF ANDALUSIA, NOW REPORTEDLY NUMBERING SOME 100,000, WAS SPOTLIGHTED LAST WEEK WHEN SOME OF THEM THREATENED TO OCCUPY, AS A

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SYMBOLIC PROTEST, LARGE LANDHOLDINGS IN THE REGION. ALTHOUGH THE OCCUPATIONS DID NOT COME OFF, THE MESSAGE HAS COME THROUGH AND THE GOVT HAS EARMARKED SPECIAL FUNDS TO MITIGATE UNEMPLOYMENT IN THAT SECTOR. BUT THERE IS NO SHORT-RUN SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM AND TENSIONS IN THE ANDALUSIAN COUNTRYSIDE ARE CERTAIN TO PERSIST AND PERHAPS EVEN WORSEN.

7. THE KING RECEIVES CARLOS HUGO. JUAN CARLOS MARCH 7 RECEIVED IN A 45-MINUTE AUDIENCE CARLOS HUGO DE BORBON PARMA, CARLIST HEIR TO THE THRONE OF SPAIN AND LEADER OF THE VAGUELY SOCIALIST "PARTIDO CARLISTA." CARLOS HUGO HAS REPEATEDLY STATED SINCE HIS RETURN TO SPAIN LAST OCTOBER THAT HE IS NO LONGER ADVANCING A RIVAL DYNASTIC CLAIM, AND THE PRESS HAS BEEN QUICK TO LABEL TODAY'S AUDIENCE AS THE "END OF A 150-YEAR-OLD DYNASTIC

DISPUTE." ALTHOUGH THIS MONARCHICAL SPAT, WHICH BEGAN
WITH THE ACCESSION TO THE THRONE OF ISABEL II IN 1833
AND PROVOKED INTERMITTENT CARLIST WARS BETWEEN 1833 AND
1876, HAD BECOME POLITICALLY LARGELY IRRELEVANT, THE
AUDIENCE WAS INDEED ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE KING'S SURE
SENSE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS. STABLER

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